



Southwestern Idaho News

ADA, ADAMS, BOISE, CANYON, ELMORE, GEM, OWYHEE, PAYETTE, VALLEY & WASHINGTON COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

The Boise-Nampa Metropolitan Statistical Area's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 2.6 percent in April, unchanged from March and half a percentage point lower than April 2006. Over 9,600 more people were working than one year ago. The number of unemployed workers declined another 100 from March and was 1,300 below April 2006, a decline of 14.4 percent. Four hundred new people entered the labor force in April while 500 found work. The difference of 100 people was not significant enough in a labor force of nearly 300,000 to lower the unemployment rate. The Boise metropolitan area's unemployment rate has been well below the level most economists consider full employment for the past year, resulting in an employee's job market where employers must become more aggressive in what they offer workers to attract and retain a quality work force. Wages are increasing, and more employee perks are being offered from flexible scheduling to more time off. A

	Civilian Labor Force	Number Unem- ployed	Percent Unem- ployed	Number Employed
Ada	199,578	4,874	2.4	194,704
Adams	2,028	97	4.8	1,932
Boise	3,661	114	3.1	3,547
Canyon	83,360	2,370	2.8	80,990
Elmore	10,945	405	3.7	10,540
Gem	7,859	239	3.0	7,619
Owyhee	5,081	91	1.8	4,990
Payette	10,528	350	3.3	10,179
Valley	5,014	155	3.1	4,859
Washington	5,206	187	3.6	5,019
Statewide	754,822	21,298	2.8	733,524

Southwestern Idaho Table 1: Boise City-Nampa MSA Labor Force & Employment (Ada, Canyon, Boise, Gem and Owyhee counties)

	Apr 2007*	Mar 2007	Apr 2006	% Change Last Month	% Change Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	299,500	299,100	291,200	0.1	2.9
Unemployment	7,700	7,800	9,000	-1.3	-14.4
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.6	2.6	3.1		
Total Employment	291,800	291,300	282,200	0.2	3.4
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	299,000	300,400	292,200	-0.5	2.3
Unemployment	8,000	9,100	9,300	-12.1	-14.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.7	3.0	3.2		
Total Employment	291,000	291,300	282,900	-0.1	2.9
JOB BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**					
GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	57,100	56,800	55,300	0.5	3.3
Natural Resources & Construction	25,200	24,800	23,900	1.6	5.4
Construction	24,900	24,500	23,600	1.6	5.5
Manufacturing	31,900	32,000	31,400	-0.3	1.6
Durable Goods	25,900	26,000	25,100	-0.4	3.2
Wood Product Manufacturing	2,700	2,600	2,800	3.8	-3.6
Fabricated Metal Products Mfg.	1,500	1,500	1,500	0.0	0.0
Machinery Manufacturing	1,300	1,300	1,200	0.0	8.3
Computer & Electronic Manufacturing	15,200	15,300	14,600	-0.7	4.1
Transportation Equipment Mfg.	2,500	2,400	2,300	4.2	8.7
Other Durable Goods	2,700	2,900	2,700	-6.9	0.0
Nondurable Goods	6,000	6,000	6,300	0.0	-4.8
Food Manufacturing	4,200	4,200	4,300	0.0	-2.3
Printing & Related Support Activities	700	700	700	0.0	0.0
Other Nondurable Goods	1,100	1,100	1,300	0.0	-15.4
SERVICE-PROVIDING INDUSTRIES	222,100	220,900	210,500	0.5	5.5
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	53,700	53,100	50,300	1.1	6.8
Trade	46,200	45,600	43,000	1.3	7.4
Wholesale Trade	12,200	12,100	11,800	0.8	3.4
Wholesalers, Durable Goods	6,900	6,900	6,800	0.0	1.5
Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	3,600	3,600	3,600	0.0	0.0
Retail Trade	34,000	33,500	31,200	1.5	9.0
Food & Beverage Stores	4,500	4,300	4,400	4.7	2.3
General Merchandise Stores	7,300	7,300	6,100	0.0	19.7
All Other Retail Trade	22,200	21,900	20,700	1.4	7.2
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	7,500	7,500	7,300	0.0	2.7
Utilities	700	700	600	0.0	16.7
Transportation & Warehousing	6,800	6,800	6,700	0.0	1.5
Information	4,700	4,700	4,600	0.0	2.2
Telecommunications	1,400	1,500	1,400	-6.7	0.0
Financial Activities	15,200	15,100	14,300	0.7	6.3
Finance & Insurance	10,700	10,700	10,100	0.0	5.9
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	4,500	4,400	4,200	2.3	7.1
Professional & Business Services	40,900	40,400	40,000	1.2	2.3
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	11,900	11,800	11,500	0.8	3.5
Management of Companies & Ent.	5,600	5,600	5,800	0.0	-3.4
Administrative & Support & Waste Mgmt.	23,400	23,000	22,700	1.7	3.1
Educational & Health Services	32,800	32,500	31,400	0.9	4.5
Educational Services	2,800	2,600	2,600	7.7	7.7
Health Care & Social Assistance	30,000	29,900	28,800	0.3	4.2
Hospitals	9,700	9,700	9,300	0.0	4.3
Leisure & Hospitality	24,100	24,200	22,900	-0.4	5.2
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	3,100	3,100	3,000	0.0	3.3
Accommodation & Food Services	21,000	21,100	19,900	-0.5	5.5
Accommodation	2,400	2,400	2,200	0.0	9.1
Food Services & Drinking Places	18,600	18,700	17,700	-0.5	5.1
Other Services	7,700	7,700	6,500	0.0	18.5
Total Government	43,000	43,200	40,500	-0.5	6.2
Federal Government	5,600	5,600	5,500	0.0	1.8
State & Local Government	37,400	37,600	35,000	-0.5	6.9
State Government	13,900	14,000	13,500	-0.7	3.0
State Government Education	4,600	4,700	4,600	-2.1	0.0
State Government Administration	9,300	9,300	8,900	0.0	4.5
Local Government	23,500	23,600	21,500	-0.4	9.3
Local Government Education	15,300	15,300	13,500	0.0	13.3
Local Government Administration	8,200	8,300	8,000	-1.2	2.5

* Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

good sign for employers is that the metropolitan area's labor force continues to grow, but the challenge is finding them before another employer does.

Nonfarm jobs continued to increase at a healthy pace in April. The area economy added 1,500 new jobs and 13,400 new jobs since April 2006, a robust growth rate of 5 percent. Nearly a third of April's job growth was in construction with the commercial and heavy construction sectors leading the way. Retail trade also posted a large increase in jobs as new stores keep popping up all over the area. Professional and business services also added 500 new jobs, 400 of them in administrative, support and waste management. In particular the employment services sector grew as these companies typically see an increase this time of year when businesses without a human resources department often turn to these companies for help in meeting their staffing needs. The April 2007 civilian labor force and total employment figures for all 10 counties in southwestern Idaho are shown in Table 2 on page 12.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

BOISE METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA

- A \$14 million repaving project on Interstate 84 has recently gotten under way between Sand Hollow and Notus. A section of road that has become increasingly rutted and worn should be replaced by fall.
- The city of Star will soon be moving into a new city hall building. The cost of the new structure is estimated at \$1.39 million, down from the original \$2.1 million. Star is a small but extremely fast growing rural community in northwest Ada County that has grown from 1,800 to an estimated 5,500 people since 2000.
- Tuition and fees at Boise State University will increase by just over 6 percent for the 2007-2008 school year. This is more than the increases at the University of Idaho, which will rise 5.95 percent, and Idaho State University, which increased 5.49 percent. Boise State's average tuition will be \$4,410 compared to the average cost of the three state universities of \$4,181. Higher operating expenses in the metropolitan area and rapid growth are driving the tuition increase.
- Nampa's Karcher Mall will soon be getting a \$5 million remodel and a couple of new tenants. Starting in June, the mall's owners plan on redoing the front of the mall, adding a tower and putting in new landscaping. Burlington Coat Factory will then take a 77,000-square-foot space at the entryway, and a Starbucks will be located there too.
- The Olive Garden is the latest well-known chain restaurant to open in the Treasure Valley Marketplace. The Nampa location can seat 279 patrons and employs 172.
- The northeast corner of Eagle Road and Fairview in Meridian has been sold to Center-Cal Properties of Portland, Ore. Center-Cal has plans to build an open air town square type retail development with 500,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space directly across Fairview from Shopko and Sportsman's Warehouse. The development would include a movie theater and a large department store.
- Idaho State University has received a \$5 million grant from the ALSAM Foundation created by the Skaggs drugstore family. With the cash, the State Board of Education has approved Idaho State's purchase of a third of the former Jabil building now owned by the Meridian School District. Idaho State plans to expand its pharmacy program at the Meridian location.
- According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, total personal income in four of the five counties comprising the Boise metropolitan area increased at a faster rate between 2004 and 2005 than the statewide average with the exception of agriculturally-dependent Owyhee County. Statewide total personal income increased by 6.5 percent to \$40.7 billion. Ada County increased by 8.6 percent to \$13.6 billion accounting for one third of the state's total. Canyon County increased by 7.9 percent to \$3.4 billion, Boise County came in with \$185 million, an increase of 6.6 percent; Gem County increased by 7.2 percent up to \$363 million and Owyhee County posted just a 0.2 percent increase to \$244 million due to lagging commodity prices. Added up, the five-county area accounts for 43 percent of statewide total personal income. Ada County ranked second in the state in per capita income at \$39,302, trailing only Blaine County's \$52,245. Canyon County ranked 40th with per capita income of \$20,397, Boise County 20th at \$24,856, Gem County 32nd at \$22,289 and Owyhee County 33rd at \$22,089.
- Nampa's Treasure Valley Marketplace continues to add tenants. Some soon-to-be-open businesses include Taco Del Mar, Del Taco, Danielle's Frozen Custard, Qdoba Mexican Grill, Tully's Coffee Shop,

Gandolfo's New York Delicatessen, San Francisco Sourdough Eatery and Junga Juice. Sportsman's Warehouse has also confirmed they will be opening a store at the Treasure Valley Marketplace as well. Other stores coming soon include OfficeMax, Classy Casuals and Kay Jewelers. T-Mobile, Mountain States Cellular, Clearwire and Best Cellular will soon be opening as well as Massage Envy, Palm Beach Tan and Dr. Simmer Chiropractic.

- Parma Post and Pole recently received a \$245,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to expand its production of fence posts, stakes and telephone poles to higher-end products for furniture or log home construction. The company uses waste wood products from forest restoration, fuel reduction and tree-thinning projects on national forest lands in its manufacturing process.
- Meridian, like Nampa is home to a large retail development, CentrePoint Marketplace anchored by Kohl's and Joe's Sporting Goods. Some new tenants are Maurice's, Verizon Wireless, video game retailer and trading post Play n Trade and Moxie Java. In addition Walgreens is currently building another valley location as is hamburger specialty restaurant Fuddruckers. Farmers and Merchants State Bank and Qdoba Mexican Grill will also be opening soon.
- Meridian is also home to a growing medical community. A 60,000-square-foot Life Care Hospital is currently under construction in the El Dorado Business Center which should encourage more medical space development in that area as well.
- Meridian is not alone in increasing its health care facilities. Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center recently announced that it will be opening a full-service emergency room at its Eagle facility this fall.
- According to the Downtown Boise Association, 150 new businesses have opened over the last five years. That translated into 844,000 cars using the downtown parking garages in 2006, a 29 percent increase over 2005.
- Hotel 43, formerly known as the Statehouse Inn, has been remodeled to include new furniture, 32-inch flat-screen televisions and carpet in its 60 rooms. The common areas were also renovated. A new hotel is opening in Meridian. The 82-room Country Inn and Suites comes with 672 square feet of meeting space and an indoor swimming pool.

- Lake City Trucks is currently building a new \$2.5 million 20,000-square-foot building in Boise. This new building will be used as a service facility, leaving space at the old facility for a body and trailer shop and for sales.

ELMORE COUNTY

- Total personal income in Elmore County increased by 3.2 percent in 2005, which is slightly below the annual inflation rate of 3.4 percent. Personal income totaled \$730 million and translates into per capita income of \$25,786, ranking 15th among Idaho's 44 counties.

PAYETTE COUNTY

- Payette County saw its total personal income increase by 5.8 percent, nearly 2.5 percent faster than inflation in 2005. The county's per capita income ranked 24th in Idaho at \$24,025 with total personal income hitting \$531 million.
- A preliminary plat and annexation request of 80 acres by Lancaster Development was recently approved by the Payette City Council. Lancaster Development is planning Gold Ridge Estates, a 218-unit custom home subdivision in the Payette foothills.

VALLEY COUNTY

- Valley County ranked third in Idaho in per capita income at \$34,126 behind only Blaine County, which includes the Sun Valley area, and Ada County. Total personal income in Valley County increased 10 percent in 2005 to \$284 million, up from \$258 million in 2004.
- Thirty-three new airport hangars, costing \$5 million, have been completed at the McCall Airport. Built by a private developer, 28 of these hangars have already been sold.
- Tamarack Resort is nearing the end of an agreement with the Idaho Parks and Recreation Board to begin construction on a new marina on Lake Cascade at the Poison Creek Campground site. The Poison Creek campsites will be moved closer to Donnelly and will include 45 other units at a former YMCA campground. Tamarack is paying \$1 million toward moving the campsites. The new marina, which will remain public, will sell gas for boats on the reservoir and will include tennis courts, 40 boat slips, a general store and a restaurant. At an estimated cost of \$5 million and if everything goes as planned, the marina is scheduled to be finished in 2009.

ADAMS COUNTY

- Adams County's total personal income increased in 2005 by 5.1 percent to \$94 million. Adams County now ranks 10th in the state in per capita income at \$26,612, up nearly \$1,000 from 2004.
- The Council library was recently the recipient of some new computers. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation donated nearly \$6,000 worth of new high-tech equipment to the library.
- Adams County has been working with Valley and Boise counties to promote the biomass industry. Biomass, or woody biomass, is waste wood from timber operations that is normally just burned. It is now being used to make building materials such as posts, landscaping timbers, mulch, bark and a multitude of other similar products. Idaho Commerce & Labor, the Forest Service, the West Central Highlands Resource Conservation and Development Area and the rural development arm of the U.S. Department of Agriculture are all signed on as financial partners.
- The city of Council has recently established new planning and zoning fees. Permits for comprehensive plan change, home office, zoning variance, conditional use permit, preliminary subdivision plats, annexation request and a development agreement will cost \$250 each.
- Holland Construction recently unveiled some affordable housing duplexes in Council. The duplexes are 1,100 square feet each with three bedrooms renting for \$650 per month. Holland has plans, and the city has already approved city water and sewer hookups, for 48 more units.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

- Per capita income in Washington County ranked 29th in the state in 2005 at \$22,548 with total personal income of \$228 million, up 3.8 percent from 2004.
- Property values in Washington County are on the rise. According to the Washington County assessor, during the last year the assessed value of property in the county has increased by 15 to 20 percent across the board.
- Canadian firm Freegold Ventures Ltd. is currently doing exploratory drilling for gold in Weiser at the former mercury mine. In 1997 a feasibility study was done at the same site, which indicated 95,000 ounces of gold could be mined each year. If the drilling is deemed successful, Freegold will

use cyanide, open-pit leach mine techniques to extract the gold from the ore.

- Robert Weed Plywood of Bristol, Ind., recently took over the Weiser Products plant. All existing employees will be retained, and Robert Weed plans an expansion in the future. Robert Weed Plywood serves the RV manufacturing and manufactured home industries, making laminated panels, cabinetry and molding.

John Panter, Regional Economist

205 E. Watertower Lane, Meridian, ID 83642

(208) 364-7785, ext. 3599

E-mail: john.panter@labor.idaho.gov

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- Provide written statements of earnings and hours worked;
- Provide worker's compensation coverage;
- Transport employees in vehicles that are properly insured, meet federal and state safety standards and operated by licensed drivers;
- Provide access to sanitary drinking water, bathrooms and facilities for washing hands;
- Make sure any housing that is provided meets federal and state safety and health standards.



Photo courtesy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

For a list of licensed farm labor contractors, contact Idaho Commerce & Labor's Wage and Hour Division at 1 (800) 843-3193 or visit us on the Web at labor.idaho.gov/wh.

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Wage and Hour Division
317 W. Main St., Boise, ID 83735
Craig Soelberg,
Wage and Hour Supervisor